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LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION ASSESSMENT

BY

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The light force can be an important combat multiplier and formidable offensive force when employed by enlightened commanders.

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**USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER**

**LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION ASSESSMENT**

**AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

by

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2 April 1990**

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## ABSTRACT

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After the Vietnam conflict the Army prepared a force that could fight and win in central Europe. Army senior leadership recognized the need for a more flexible capability to meet other worldwide contingencies. To meet the Chief of Staff of the Army guidance, the light division was designed to be no larger than 10,000 soldiers and capable of deploying in 500 C-141B sorties. This paper addresses the light infantry division's strategic role, operational employment and the unique characteristics of light infantry forces. It will make assessments on some of the capabilities and limitations of the light infantry division. The light force can be an important combat multiplier and formidable offensive force when employed by enlightened commanders.

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# LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION ASSESSMENT

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1984 the Chief of Staff of the Army published his White Paper on light infantry divisions. The White Paper provided guidance on how the U.S. Army would go about creating light infantry divisions. General Wickham, CSA, believed that the Army had the opportunity to create the best light infantry possible. The White Paper stated:

Army leadership is convinced, based on careful examination of studies which postulate the kind of world in which we will be living and the nature of conflict we can expect to face, that an important need exists for highly trained, rapidly deployable light forces. The British action in the Falkland Islands, Israeli operations in Lebanon, and our recent success in Grenada, confirmed that viable forces do not always have to be heavy forces. This 10,000(+) man force will have a greater tooth-to-tail ratio than any of our other Army divisions and will be deployable worldwide three times faster than existing infantry divisions. It will be an offensively oriented, highly responsive division organized for a wide range of missions worldwide, particularly where close fighting terrain exists.<sup>1</sup>

Some senior leaders in the Army did not agree nor did they support the development of new light infantry divisions. Many were quick to point out the light divisions' inherent deficiencies in fire power, tactical mobility and logistics capability. Since the Army did not increase its end strength, many in the heavy

community saw the light forces stripping away their much needed combat and combat service support structure.

Recent events in 1990 have made former Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Generals Meyer and Wickham, prophets who read correctly the changing world situation and the direction that the U.S. Army would have to take if it was going to be a viable force in the year 2000 and beyond.

#### BACKGROUND

In General Meyer's 1980 White Paper, he wrote:

Our current program for the rapid reinforcement of NATO has focused on the early deployment of heavy forces. However, we must continually examine the utility of light, rapidly deployable divisions in Central Europe to achieve a balance of heavy and light forces that will provide a better overall defense posture given the terrain variations and urban sprawl that exists and is projected in much of the region. There are many employment options open to leaders in the employment of light forces.<sup>2</sup>

General Meyer realized that the Army had prepared well for the Central European theater, but had neglected other contingencies that the Army would most likely be employed against. Due to limited lift resources, the ability to project land combat power can be extremely difficult. However, Army senior leadership realized that the Army must have strategic forces that are easily deployable. The Army Training and Doctrine Command directed a study be conducted in October 1979 to help the Army better meet its requirement to respond to contingencies around the globe.

The study had three objectives.<sup>3</sup>

- Develop new and innovative operational concepts for light divisions to discharge contingency plans worldwide and to reinforce deployed forces in an established theater of operations.

- Reorganize and upgrade the Army's light divisions to take advantage of new concepts and of advanced materiel systems under development, combining high strategic mobility with combat power and sustainability.

- Plan the transition to the new divisions.

The study addressed three types of light divisions:

- The Airborne Division

- The Air Assault Division

- The ground mobile light division (referred to as "ID 86" which ultimately evolved into today's light infantry division).

The light infantry division is trained and equipped to fight in the low intensity conflict environment, to reinforce forward deployed heavy forces and to deploy into contingency operations such as Just Cause conducted recently in Panama. Light infantry forces are characterized by an offensive orientation designed to retain the initiative in combat. The mindset and warfighting ethic of the light infantry significantly differs from that of regular and heavy infantry. The light infantry has a unique tactical style focusing on the offense; a trained understanding of and affinity with terrain and the operational environment; a freedom from dependence on lines of communications; a penchant

for decentralized operations; and a requirement for self reliance on the part of soldiers and leaders. Constant, aggressive, offensive actions cause the enemy to react to the activity of the light force, not vice versa. These characteristics are necessary not only for success, however just as important, they are essential for survival of the force.

Airland Battle seeks to quickly wrestle the initiative from the enemy in order to force him to be reactive. Battlefield imperatives require unity of effort and concentration of combat power to attack from unexpected directions with unexpected means against enemy vulnerabilities. As a result, the tempo and timing of the enemy attack is upset, the speed of the enemy attack is lost, and momentum shifts. The integration of light and heavy forces and the coordination of their combined efforts are critical if the Army is going to be successful on the battlefield of tomorrow.

# ENDNOTES

1. GEN John A. Wickham, Jr, White Paper 1984: Light Infantry Divisions, p.1.
2. GEN Edward C. Meyer, White Paper 1980: Molding the Army of the 1980s, p.1.
3. U.S. Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Combat Developments Study Directive: Light Divisions for the Next Decade (LD86), p.2.

## CHAPTER II

### CONCEPT OF LIGHT DIVISIONS

The Army had prepared well to fight on NATO's central front, but could not respond with a credible force quickly to contingency areas to deter conflict or fight and win should deterrence fail. The Army realized that it needed a force which could respond to worldwide missions ranging from low-to-mid-intensity conflicts.

### MANNING THE LIGHT DIVISIONS

General Wickham's 1984 Chief of Staff White Paper states that quality officers and noncommissioned officers will be selected for light infantry units. They must meet stringent selection and retention criteria--compete to get in and compete to stay in. Many leadership positions will require Ranger training. Unit commanders will be among the most experienced officers in the Army. NCO leader positions will be filled by the most technically competent, physically fit trainers we can muster.

Austerity in the light infantry design demands that these divisions be fully structured and manned at 100 percent of authorized levels. The Cohesion Operational Readiness and Training system or COHORT, which stabilizes soldiers and leaders in companies and battalions, will allow horizontal and vertical bonding from initial entry training through deployment to combat. Within this more stable unit environment, cohesion, the powerful,

intangible combat multiplier, will help produce tight knit, self-confident, competent units capable of withstanding the most demanding stresses of war.<sup>1</sup>

#### DESIGN GUIDANCE

In August 1983, the Chief of Staff of the Army directed Training and Doctrine Command to prepare a 10K-soldier LID design that required minimal support in immature theaters and was affordable within current resources. The key design criteria were:<sup>2</sup>

- The LID must possess high strategic mobility and combat potency within austere parameters.

- The LID must be designed for low intensity, but have a "plug-in" capability for mid- and high-intensity scenarios.

- The LID is to be transportable with 500 sorties (C-141B) and will be about 10K aggregate strength, of which half must be infantry.

- The LID must have utility in the NATO.

- Every avenue for minimizing personnel requirements and deployability profile will be explored. Efforts should be innovative in their approach.

- The LID will normally operate as part of a corps or joint task force.

- The LID will have utility in a broad spectrum of conflicts, and must be organized to provide the interface

necessary for the rapid and efficient integration of augmentation forces.

- Workload and allocation factors will be reduced to the minimum essential for operations.

#### DESIGN CONSTRAINTS

After an initial design review, the Combined Arms Center (CAC) developed constraints within which the basic organizations were to:<sup>3</sup>

- Ensure commonality of equipment, supplies, ammunition, and organizational structures.

- Optimize designs for low- to mid-intensity conflict, but retain usefulness in NATO.

- Reduce noncombat soldiers to a minimum.

- Make organic those functions and assets that are always needed.

- Pool those functions and assets that are only occasionally required at corps or echelons above corps.

- Eliminate unneeded links in the chains of command, supply and administration.

- Minimize support requirements.

- Identify augmentation units required to facilitate rapid integration of forces.

- Maximize the use of additional duties, dual training, and multiple mission individuals and units.

- Minimize the type of materiel required in the division.

- Units need to be self-sustaining.

- Ensure compatibility of the support system with division's foot mobility.

- Increase the leader-to-led ratio.

The LID is composed primarily of foot-mobile light fighters. Its brigades and battalions are organized, equipped, and trained to conduct combat operations against light enemy forces on any type terrain and under all environmental conditions. Operations during limited visibility is the norm. If properly task-organized and augmented, the LID can attack and defend against heavy forces in close terrain only. The LID is a tactical force with strategic responsiveness, lightness, and flexibility.<sup>4</sup>

# ENDNOTES

1. GEN John A. Wickham, Jr., White Paper 1984: Light Infantry Divisions, p.3.
2. U.S. Department of the Army, Independent Evaluation Report for Certification of the Light Infantry Division Vol. I, p.1.
3. Ibid, p.2.
4. Lieutenant Colonel David H. Wayne, Military Study Project 15 March 1989; Can the Army Support the Light Division?. p.9.

## CHAPTER III

### STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE LID

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have stated that, "The basic military strategy of the United States is to deter war."<sup>1</sup> This policy has been consistent over the years and has been the basis for our nuclear deterrent strategy as well as for our forward deployed forces. This Military Strategy directly supports US National Strategy. President Reagan stated that a major objective of national security is to "maintain national security by deterring aggression against the US and our allies." In an address to the nation on 23 March 1983, President Reagan stated, "The defense policy of the United States is based on a simple premise: The United states does not start fights. We will never be an aggressor. We maintain our strength in order to deter and defend against aggression--to preserve freedom and peace. Deterrence means simply this: Making sure any adversary who thinks about attacking the United States or our allies or our vital interests concludes that the risks to him outweigh any potential gains. Once he understands that, he won't attack."<sup>2</sup>

The nature of the United States' interests around the world and its coalition-based strategy will require that US forces be globally deployable, often with little or no warning, from the United States or from forward bases. While operational circumstances will determine which deployment mode is best in each case,

the Army must have forces prepared to execute either option.

The Army's ability to deploy units rapidly -- to reinforce our forward-deployed forces in maintaining deterrence, to support allies in defusing a crisis, and to fight -- has been tested repeatedly around the world. Recent events in Panama and current trends in the international environment make it abundantly clear that rapid deployment will become even more important in the future.<sup>3</sup>

During the recent Panama invasion, light forces played the major role. Because of their relatively easy deployment capability, the new light division is an ideal follow-on force or lead element in many contingency operations. The light infantry division is clearly a key element in our national military strategy.

# ENDNOTES

1. Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, United States Military Posture Fiscal Year 1984, p.1.

2. President Ronald Reagan, National Security of the United States, p.3.

3. The United States Army, A Strategic Force for the 1990's and Beyond, p.12.

## CHAPTER IV

### EMPLOYMENT OF THE LID

As a result of extended frontages in Europe and the nature of war in LIC, the speed that forces can be moved about the width and depth of the battlefield is critical to winning. At the same time, terrain restrictions on mobility, improved intelligence and target acquisition means, and increased weapon lethality can make maneuvering heavy forces more perilous than ever before. Light forces can provide speed, agility and firepower to compensate for the loss of the heavy divisions' ground mobility capability in close terrain. Initiative and aggressive pursuit of fleeting opportunities remain essential since the windows of opportunity open for only brief periods. Consequently, commanders in high intensity areas such as Europe require a responsive infantry force capable of conducting air assault and dismounted infantry operations in terrain unsuitable for mechanized forces.

Although created to perform and best suited for offensive tasks, the light infantry division can be utilized in the defense. However, such missions fail to capitalize on the special capabilities of the light infantry, in particular, their superior relative tactical mobility in close terrain, and their focus on movement by stealth, and the offensive orientation. Tying the light infantry to a fixed piece of terrain increases its vulnerability and robs the commander of the special skills available in the LID to be

used as combat multipliers. Such missions essentially are battles of attrition. The equipment, weapons, logistics, and other support systems simply do not permit this. However, on a short term basis, the LID can provide a robust defense. It remains only for the commander to recognize that its survivability and utility diminish the longer it remains in a role for which it is unsuited. One remedy is to reinforce the LID to permit accomplishment of the missions which are more attrition based or which rely more upon brute force approaches. This was done throughout World War II and Korea on a routine basis. Only the commander can assess the opportunity costs and weigh the consequences. Commanders must seek to use light infantry in offensive roles, even when heavy forces are in a defensive posture. However, light infantry should be used by the commander as an offensive weapon within a defensive framework. Light forces may complement heavy forces in most defensive missions. Some form of the delay, defense of restrictive terrain or strong points, elements of the rear battle mission, penetration of restrictive terrain and a deliberate attack are appropriate light infantry missions. The conventional tactics of regular infantry characterized by intensive artillery preparation, significant combat support, massing of combat power before the attack, and maneuver of large formations are the antithesis of light infantry tactics. Light infantry tactics are characterized by surprise, shock, and speed -- qualities achieved by dispersion, difficult to detect movement of forces, and rapid concentration,

followed by dispersal. In sum, the relationship between mechanized and light forces is "akin that between a chain saw and scalpel". Both are cutting instruments and both have specific uses.

Much as been written and said about using the LID in Europe and Southwest Asia. There is no single type force able to defeat the enemy on all types of terrain. Task organization of any combat force must be based on METT-T. In the mid to high intensity environment in the macro view, armored forces are used as the decisive element of the operational design. Regular infantry, used as the anvil for armored forces, with light infantry conducting special purpose operations, unlocks the operational combat power of the armored force. The types of operations include defense of urban terrain or strong points, rear area combat operations, infiltration attacks to assist in the penetration of enemy defenses, operations in limited visibility and restrictive terrain, defense of a river line, defense of a mountain pass and all air assault operations. It is clear that there is no one force that adequately meets all battlefield requirements, rather it is a mix based on METT-T.

The current area that U.S. forces defend in Central Europe is hilly, forested and heavily urbanized. Villages and forests comprise over 60 percent of the available terrain. The critical aspect of this statistic is that attacking Warsaw Pact Forces must continually clear these areas or risk defeat in detail. The key to employing light forces is the selection of appropriate terrain and missions. The offensive role of the light infantry force must

be considered paramount in assigning tasks. Infiltration attack, penetration operations, and developing and holding a breach will be most successful when they are carried out in restrictive terrain so that the light force gains protected mobility. Light infantry forces defend best on restrictive terrain and in depth -- and only for brief periods. Urbanized terrain, heavily forested areas, and cross compartmented terrain afford the best opportunity for success in light infantry defensive operations. To the extent that light infantry is augmented, the defense becomes viable. However, augmentation of the LID can remove resources from other forces and has an obvious opportunity cost to the use of the light force in missions for which it is better suited. Light forces are best suited for offensive operations of short duration against specified targets. These targets should be high payoff and vulnerable to ground attack. Destruction of these targets should disrupt echelonment of enemy forces and upset their time table.

There is some debate about how to best employ light forces. Many would say that the division as a whole should not be employed but rather that a brigade would be more appropriate in most situations. Selection of the preferred organization should be based on consideration of the terrain, type of enemy to be encountered, and the inherent capabilities of the division and its sub-elements. Logistical support is tailored to support the division and becomes increasingly less efficient and effective as the division is employed in a piecemeal fashion.

J. Holmes Armstead, Jr., in his VIEWPOINT article, November 1988, "Too Light to Fight?", points out that the Army's light infantry division exchanges firepower for speed and mobility. Armstead points out that the objectives for the light division include the ability to provide an early assault on enemy operations, be fully deployable to remote and difficult terrain within seven days, and possesses the ability to operate behind enemy lines until link-up with friendly forces or reinforcement. The light-weight deployability comes to the LID at the expense of heavy combat vehicles, which provide both large scale battlefield mobility and significant numbers of antiaircraft and antiarmor weapon systems. There is no doubt that light divisions travel light and fight light.<sup>1</sup> The LID is not a firepower based type of organization. It relies on stealth, night operations, superb leaders, and tough fighting soldiers who are well trained and disciplined. These characteristics make it a dynamic force and makes up for some of its loss in firepower.

It is true that the LID possesses less firepower than a mechanized unit. It is also true that the LID cannot move as rapidly as a mechanized force in open terrain. It is not true that these are inherent deficiencies. The proper employment of any force has the purpose of seeking to gain relative advantage in all or specific elements of combat power at the decisive point. A formation's firepower, mobility or sustainability, and therefore its strength or deficiencies are relative to that of the enemy

at any particular point in time. Therefore, one must constantly seek to tailor forces and missions in order to maximize the inherent strength of each unit in relation to other forces in the overall force mix. Obviously, METT-T considerations come into play. It is clear that the LID enjoys a clear advantage over heavier forces under certain conditions. It seems obvious that we must have commanders who understand when light forces can be used to advantage.

The light division rounds out and balances the deterrence of our conventional forces. In certain contingencies light infantry might comprise the chief component of the force. This would be true in response to a Southeast Asia or Central America contingency or in NATO where it would be a valuable addition. In each case, the rapid response and deployment of light divisions would be a sign of US resolve and intentions.<sup>2</sup>

The crucial question is whether the new divisions better prepare the Army to meet the full range of threats that it may face in the 1990s. The fundamental need was to fashion a division for low-intensity conflict without degrading its worth to any corps to which it might be committed when faced with a greater threat environment. As the Army moves into the 21st century, it must have a proper mix of combat forces. As stated by the Army leadership recently, light forces are an important part of the Army of the future.

## OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

To further define the operational concept for employment of light infantry it is necessary to look at the light division mission throughout the various spectrum of conflict. The LID mission is to rapidly deploy as a Light Infantry Combined Arms Force, defeat enemy forces in a low-intensity conflict, and when properly augmented, fight and win in a mid- to high-intensity conflict.<sup>3</sup> The LID must be able to deploy on short notice into a contingency area. However, it must be a credible combat fighting force upon arrival in theater.

Operations in a low-intensity environment are expected to be a no-notice type contingency to a third world nation (immature theater). This commitment of U.S. forces, usually as part of a joint task force, supports the national strategy. While a conflict may be ongoing, this would represent the first introduction of U.S. combat forces (beyond military assistance teams and SOF). The division, utilized under this operational concept, is specifically configured to deploy rapidly to achieve strategic and operational surprise. While the division has no forced entry capability, it is capable of securing and defending a lodgment area needed for follow-on support forces. The LID is also our excellent follow-on force after force entry operations. It is easy to rapidly deploy either by surface or air, and can fight upon arrival.

Operations in a mid- to high-intensity environment could see

a LID as a later deploying force to a forward deployed corps. However, the highest payoff would be realized when a LID is deployed during prehostilities. At that point, a direct swap-out of a light for a heavy division could be achieved. Any corps which receives a light division before hostilities could integrate the division into its defensive plan, utilizing restrictive terrain and urban areas, while placing a full heavy division in reserve. This is not as easily done once the battle is underway.<sup>4</sup> The best option for deploying the LID in this environment would be in an offensive nature most likely against soft targets at night during foul weather.

#### OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Operational considerations for the employment of a light division in peacetime contingency operations should be further addressed:

- Rapid insertion of ground combat forces has a significant impact on a crisis situation.

- The light division is primarily a deterrent force capable of defeating a low intensity threat. It is best suited to perform demonstrations, show of force, raid and strike operations. If required, it can perform noncombatant evacuation (NEO).

- The light division does not possess the force structure to operate as three separate brigades. To be effective, it must be employed as a complete division. This synchronized, combined arms team can create operational opportunities in a theater.

- Employment of the light division should take advantage of its offensive orientation, its ability to operate at night and

in restrictive terrain, and to adapt quickly to various modes of transport available to the force.

The ability to deploy a "credible" force quickly is an essential form of deterrence and as such is part of today's military strategy. The creation of the modern light infantry division gives the U.S. a greater ability to respond quickly. A conventional infantry division takes over two weeks to deploy by air. While the Army has an airborne division that can jump in and fight as regular infantry and an air assault division that can be flown over a battlefield, these are not light and require substantial strategic lift assets. Even under a lightened Army of Excellence (AOE) design, these divisions are relatively heavy and once deployed lack the foxhole strength of the light division.<sup>5</sup> The following graph depicts the different requirements for aircraft sorties by the type of division.

<u>Type of Division</u>	<u>No. C141B Sorties</u>	<u>Percent Foxhole Strength</u>
Light Inf	510	32%
Airborne	600	23%
Air Assault	976	19%
Motorized	1,173	10%

The light division was created as a balance between the strategic imperatives and resource constraints. It possesses increased infantry fighting (foxhole) strength, a significant reduction in required support structure and an overall decrease

in size. The light division has expanded the range of options available to the National Command Authority (NCA). Its rapid deployment to the critical point can defuse a crisis, possibly precluding the need for a larger, more costly, force. The division's light strategic lift requirement permits quick insertion and extraction and fills a void in meeting US strategic requirements. This refinement of force structure is long overdue and restores a proper balance to the US Army's ability to meet its worldwide commitment in support of national strategy.<sup>6</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

1. Jim Armstead, Jr., Too Light to Fight: Viewpoint, November 1988, p.18.
2. GEN William E. DePuy, "The Light Infantry. Indispensible Element of a Balanced Force", Army, June 1985, p.37.
3. MG William H. Harrison, Operational Employment of Light Divisions, Memorandum, 6 July 1987.
4. COL Huba Wass de Czege, Light Infantry in Europe Study Fact Finding Trip (17-26 April 1988), Memorandum for Record, 27 April 1988.
5. U.S. Department of the Army, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) Capabilities Book, p.4.
6. Ibid., p.1.

## CHAPTER V

### COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT STRUCTURE

One of the most controversial aspects of the light division is the combat service support structure. The design concept was to achieve the maximum foxhole strength while not exceeding more than 500 C-141B sorties for deployment. The Army thus had to assume some degree of risk to meet the design constraints. Some combat service support limitations built into the LID structure are:<sup>1</sup>

- An external source (corps support or a corps slice) of backup logistics support is required within 48 hours (after closure) to sustain the division.

- The division cannot rely solely on host nation support in a contingency area of operations.

- If the division is deployed in a contingency area, and not as part of a larger force, it must be deployed with a "division slice" of essential corps CSS elements to provide a self-sustaining capability for limited periods of time.

While CSS for the light division is designed to maximize the number of weapon systems fully operable on the battlefield, the operational concept for the LID states: "However, in any of the missions envisioned for the light division, external CSS is required. This support ranges from a backup corps slice deployed as part of the division task force during contingency operations to full backup support by an established corps during forward deployed operations."<sup>2</sup>

The division emphasizes the use of airlift for deployment and airlift or airdrop for resupply. Only essential CSS functions are performed by the division's organic assets. Supply inventories and transportation are intensively managed by the Division Support Command (DISCOM) elements to make maximum use of unit distribution. Whenever possible, throughput of supplies from external sources is made to the unit or brigade support area to reduce handling.<sup>3</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Operational Concept for the Infantry Division (Light), p.H-1.

2. Ibid., p.H-2.

3. Ibid., p.H-3.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

In General Wickham's Chief of Staff White Paper he describes the characteristics of light infantry divisions. To deter, the light infantry division must be able to fight --- anytime, anywhere, and against any opponent.<sup>1</sup>

This demanding mission requires the highest degree of tactical excellence. These will be offensively oriented units. Especially in low intensity conflict, they will be able to seek out and destroy the enemy on his terrain, using initiative, stealth and surprise. Attacks by infiltration, air assault, ambush, and raid will be the norm. Light infantry divisions will be "terrain-using forces, expert in camouflage, skilled in counter-mobility techniques, and quick to seize advantages afforded by their tough and spirited soldiers. The division fort<sup>é</sup> will be operating at night or under conditions of limited visibility. Even in defensive missions in close terrain or built up areas, light infantry forces will habitually ambush, attack and counter-attack."<sup>2</sup>

Division operations will be characterized by flexibility, both in tactical deployment and organization for combat. Light infantry forces will habitually operate as a combined arms team with organic engineers, artillery, aviation, and air defense. When suitably augmented and task organized for the mission, they will be capable of operating independently at brigade, battalion

and company levels. In addition, they can be reinforced with, or can themselves reinforce with airborne, air assault, special operations, armored or mechanized forces.<sup>3</sup>

Light infantry force missions should be offensively based, seeking to gain relative advantage over the enemy. The question of augmentation is based on what the commander is trying to achieve using a light force. For deep operations against soft targets, little or no augmentation may be required. For defensive operations in which the mission may be to defend over a long period of time, extensive augmentation may be required. As the LID is augmented, its nature is changed and it becomes an organization which no longer fights in a manner consistent with the philosophy that governs its existence.

Early introduction into the theater is essential. One of the strengths of the LID is its capability to strategically deploy utilizing a minimum of strategic airlift assets. Strategically mobile light forces are needed to secure US interests worldwide. These forces act as a deterrent because of their deployability and, if required to be employed, provide an effective economy of force measures that gains time for generation of heavier forces. Force augmentation prior to deployment tends to defeat the purpose of the LID and presupposes missions that may not be suitable for a light force. Light infantry forces are expert at internal force tailoring once committed to a theater of operations. More fundamentally though, the question must be answered by the commander who assesses the risk involved by early and rapid deployment of a

force which may be subject to defeat against the alternative of deploying a heavier force which will surely arrive too late to influence the political/military outcome.

The light division can be moved in their entirety using less than 500 C-141 aircraft sorties, whereas the regular infantry requires a mixture of 662 C-5 and C-141 sorties to transport it overseas. While the tooth-to-tail ratio is very impressive in the light division (2.7 to 1), it is achieved at the expense of combat power and service support.<sup>4</sup>

The light division may be employed with minimal external support in a variety of scenarios, however it will usually be deployed as part of a corps force. The light division can be supported with additional combat or support units from corps level when required by a particular type mission or threat. Certain minimum corps support will be required, regardless of the scenario. The units providing this type of support are referred to as augmentation and the determination of the type and quantity of augmentation is dependent on the specific mission.

Many believe that light divisions are not able to operate with heavy divisions on the mid-to-high intensity battlefield. One must look at METT-T factors when assigning any military force a mission.

Military forces must be tailored not only to the potential adversary but to terrain and weather as well. Field Manual 100-5 states that "weather and terrain have more impact on battle than any other physical factor, including weapons, equipment and supplies."<sup>5</sup>

Light infantry forces are unique. Light infantry is distinguished by their attitude of self-reliance, their mastery of the environment, their versatility, and their esprit d' corps. The most important of these characteristics is an attitude of self-reliance, the basis for which all of its other characteristics flow. Light infantrymen are typically confident that they will survive, overcome, and prevail in any situation. Their resourcefulness permits them to devise schemes to accomplish their mission, regardless of unfavorable conditions, such as being cut off or outnumbered. Furthermore, they must learn to do without the comforts and benefits that other soldiers consider to be a necessity. They are not psychologically or physically tied to a logistic lifeline. Their self-reliance is typified by self-denial, fortitude, tenacity, and resourcefulness. This is the way they train--and this is the way they will fight.

This self-reliant attitude enables light infantrymen to embrace their environment as a shelter, protector, provider, and home. They have a well developed appreciation for tactical aspects of terrain because of their ability to accept and understand their environment. Light infantrymen possess an unmatched tactical mobility on difficult terrain. Whether moving by helicopter or infiltrating to an objective over seemingly impassable terrain, light infantrymen capitalize on stealth, surprise, speed, and shock.

The forté of light infantry is the conduct of operations at night during adverse weather. Offensively oriented and flexible

light infantry battalions infiltrate to the objective by squads, at staggered times, through seams in the enemy lines. These small groups assemble near the objective and rise suddenly among the enemy as a massed force. With the achievement of surprise, these forces can deliver a heavy volume of fire during a short period of time. This firepower, coupled with assault on the flank or rear of the enemy position, creates a shock effect and produces a kill ratio which quickly reduces enemy resistance. Upon completion of the attack, light infantry forces dissipate into small units and return to friendly territory.

The light force can be very productive, but is highly vulnerable if employed without the proper analysis of the mission, enemy, terrain, troops and time available (METT-T). Light infantrymen are human. They get tired, become sick, and lose their effectiveness like other soldiers. Improperly used they will die at alarming rates. On the other hand, employed by enlightened commanders, they can be a formidable offensive force.

#### ENDNOTES

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2. Ibid., p.1.

3. Ibid., p.2.

4. CPT David H. Petraeus, Light Infantry in Europe: Strategic flexibility and Conventional Deterrence, Military Review, December 1984, p.38.

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